

**CLARK COUNTY
CLEAN WATER COMMISSION
Meeting Notes**

Wednesday, August 15, 2001
6:00 – 8:30 PM

Clark County Public Works Department
Conference Room
4700 NE 78th Street
Vancouver, Washington

Call to Order

Roll Call:

Clark County Clean Water Commission Members Present

Cal Ek, Dana Kemper, Mary Martin, Susan Rasmussen, Don Steinke, Art Stubbs and Peter Tuck

Clark County Clean Water Commission Member Absent

Robbie Agard, and Willie Bourlet

Clark County Public Works Staff

Peter Capell, Kelli Frost, Sam Giese and Earl Rowell

Clark County Treasurer Staff

John Payne

Audience

Virginia VanBreeman

Introduction

The members of the Clark County Clean Water Commission, Clark County staff, and audience, were introduced. Chair, Commissioner Kemper, then called the meeting to order.

Agenda and material review

The material for tonight's meeting include:

1. 8/15/01 Clark County Clean Water Commission Meeting Agenda;
 2. 7/18/01 Clark County Clean Water Commission Meeting Notes;
 3. Article from the Columbian dated 8/09/01, entitled Some may get a break on fees;
 4. Editorial from the Columbian dated 8/12/01;
 5. Letter from Douglas M. Steinbarger at Washington State University Cooperative Extension, to Mr. Meats at Clark County Public Works, Environmental Services Division, regarding: Watershed Stewards Program 2001 First Quarter Report;
- Memorializing the Outcome of BOCC meeting on August, 8, 2001 work session;
 - Summary findings for Proposed Incentives No. 1;
 - Agency survey; and
 - Potential Clean Water Program Fee Incentives (Reduction) Recommendation.

7/18/01 notes

The notes from the 7/18/01 Clark County Clean Water Commission meeting were approved as written.

Updates/Communications from the public/media/agencies

Mr. Rowell reviewed the proposed modifications to ordinance 13.30A.

The definition of Base Unit has been added. (page 3, line 8);

The definition of impervious surface has been added. (page 3, line 18);

Clarification was made regarding state highway clean water fee rates. (page 6, line 24);

Addition 13.30A.065 reduced service charge for hardship status. (page 9, line 6) and;

Clarifications on the appeal process. (page 11, line 23) and (page 12, line 3-5)

Additional modifications to the ordinance, (page 12, line 16-17)

The public hearing will be held on Tuesday, August 21, 2001 at 10:00 a.m. located in the BOCC hearing's room.

Mr. Stubbs: Is the Clean Water Commission satisfied with the rough draft?

Mr. Kemper: I feel that the intent of the original ordinance is merely being clarified and these changes make sense.

Mr. Rowell explained that the material sent by Washington State University is a First Quarter Annual Report on the Watershed Stewards Program.

Ms. Rasmussen: Mr. Chairman, I would like Virginia VanBreeman to give her personal comments on the Watershed Stewards program.

Ms. VanBreeman: He had some trouble because he (Gary Bock) had signed up guest speakers and some of them didn't come. Those that did show up were very good speakers. One of the good things was the very last week he put on the volunteer ideas fair, where different people would show their volunteer programs. Gary is very good at providing other volunteer opportunities and projects throughout the county.

Mr. Kemper: How do you see yourself and others who went through the class making a difference?

Ms. VanBreeman: Many Watershed Steward graduates are involved in restoration projects, and some, including myself are going through the River Rangers program.

Ms. Martin: Compared to other programs that you have attended what is the difference in length?

Ms. VanBreeman: The other programs went about two months.

Ms. VanBreeman: The other programs also handed out more information. I offered to help (Gary) and copy material, but he never accepted.

Mr. Stubbs: What was your cost involved?

Ms. VanBreeman: The cost is the volunteer projects we are required to do.

Ms. VanBreeman: Gary is very good at talking to people, but he also needs someone to help him.

Mr. Rowell: What you are saying is that Gary needs an assistant?

Ms. VanBreeman: Yes he does.

Mr. Rowell asked Mr. Stubbs and Mr. Steinke to comment on their experiences of volunteering at the Clark County Fair in the Watershed Stewards booth.

Mr. Steinke: The majority of the people that stopped at the booth were people that I knew or parents who stopped because their children were playing the computer game. I made some suggestions to Gary like maybe having some demonstrations to attract more people.

Ms. VanBreeman: There are two objects that are perfect for Watershed Stewards. One is a stand up display that is located at the Water Resources Center. The other is a flat display and I'm not sure where it is located.

Mr. Stubbs: I only had one person stop by.

Ms. Martin: I went to the Tillamook County Fair and they had a stormwater booth/presentation, the gentleman was giving away water bottles to attract people to the booth, when I approached the booth the gentleman said you are the first person in five days to look at the presentation.

Mr. Stubbs: One of the brochures that people were really interested in and would take with them was the Natural Yard and Garden booklet. The other brochure's people would look at and then put back.

Mr. Steinke: I would like to see next year on the table some models on how we treat the stormwater.

Mr. Kemper: Is there any way one could put together a model that had the dirty water off of surfaces through the system and come out at the other end clean.

Mr. Rowell: That sounds like a project the watershed stewards could make.

Mr. Stubbs: It may take a kindergarten level display to get any kind of education across.

Ms. Martin: Art Stubbs made the comment that he thought it would be 20 – 25 years before we made an impact. I think more accurately is that Oregon and Washington has had the luxury of not being as highly densely populated as other states which have been addressing clean water issues for some time, and it has made an impact and it didn't take 20 years and I don't think it will take 20 years here. The rule of thumb is if you don't pay for it you don't appreciate it, and we are charging people \$33.00 and we don't have their attention. I don't think we should charge them more, because I don't think we need to, but the point is until they really feel the pain, they are not going to give you that type of attention.

Fee Incentives/Reductions

Mr. Rowell: After the last Clean Water Commission Meeting, (July 18, 2001) we are down to two general incentives. The first is in regards to the single-family residential customer and the second is in regards to multi-family, commercial and industrial property.

In the first one, the single-family residential customer it was decided at the last meeting to raise the discount to \$10.00 or \$15.00 respectively. Staff took that information and tried to determine if it was possible to implement this incentive. If a coupon was distributed and redeemed for a reduction in the clean water fee it was determined that the administration costs would be high and it would be very complex to implement. \$5.00 reduction of a clean water fee is probably not enough for people to care but a coupon for a car wash might be something that people are more interested in. If you make it a coupon and make it part of an existing program education component then it may be feasible, but if you make it a reduction of their fee it is not feasible.

Mr. Ek: Initially the idea was to have an opportunity for single-family fee payers to reduce their fee. We never proposed having some sort of way to encourage them to participate in county activities for a payment that is usable some other way. If the coupon can't be used for a fee reduction then I think we have lost focus from where we started a year ago and we should abandoned this issue.

Mr. Kemper: Pete or John can you expand as to why this is not feasible?

Mr. Payne: The Treasurer's system is a very antiquated system written in cobalt. What we would have to do to do a fee reduction is one of two things. 1. Either a credit or do a refund. Refunds we would have to know who paid it which means we would have to track the check and make sure that the person who paid it receives the refund. Then we would have to credit the system. That whole process takes approximately four hours from beginning to end. It would cost approximately \$60.00 in staff time to refund \$10.00. A credit is doable if you want to pay for the programming. To create the receipt function for this computer system it would cost \$100,000.

Mr. Capell: With this particular fee, we have depending on the particular situation we have a wide variety of fees that we are charging, could we not just have a separate fee for a single-family residence who has qualified for a reduction?

Mr. Payne: As long as it is before we develop the statement.

Mr. Capell: What I would propose is that in order to receive a credit they would have had to attend a program prior to a certain date. So then the statement could reflect the credit.

Mr. Payne: There would have to be document to track those who would receive a credit, that document would go through Earl and GIS who would create the fee.

Mr. Ek: If we implement this and word gets out in the county that we are paying people to attend these meetings or paying people to plant a few trees and where is the money coming from? From their clean water fee, that will not go over well.

They want that money to go to clean the water not to pay someone to attend a meeting.

Mr. Giese: Portland, prior to setting up their existing system of credits did have as part of their overall combined sewer overflow project a program to assist people with disconnecting their roof drains. Portland does have an exemption for single families. Gresham's maximum is the same. I don't think that Vancouver has an incentive program built in.

Mr. Stubbs: I would like to know what these cities/counties are paying in monthly fees compared to our fee.

Mr. Capell: For the commercial/industrial customer is it roughly the same impervious surface calculation?

Mr. Giese: Typically ours is higher than others are. I think the average is 2500 to 3000 square feet.

Mr. Giese: I can provide you a chart that will list of the fees of the different cities/counties.

Mr. Giese: King County has one of the most recent revisions to their stormwater ordinance and one of their most recent changes which included some additional exemptions was an exemption for residential sites that maintain 65% tree cover. Another exemption that shows up in a number of jurisdictions is the rain drain off the municipal system.

Ms. Martin: Maybe we should table the single-family incentives.

Motion 2001-0815-11: To set aside the single-family incentives until it is feasible to implement.

Motion passed

Mr. Capell: What Sam was talking about was single family BMP's that might be more palatable and while education is clearly very important, the BMP's offer value too.

Mr. Kemper: I think we should present to the Board of County Commissioners that we tried to make the single-family incentive work this way, but it is not currently feasible. There are other options that we will look into and make suggestions based upon future recommendations.

Mr. Giese: What has been discussed before is that a reduction in fee will be granted based on the use of on-site stormwater BMP's. The reduction in fee is conditioned on certification that the system meets the criteria. The certification needs to be on file, on site. In order to qualify for the incentive there needs to be an annual maintenance and condition report which is filed with the county which includes a declaration that there has been no modifications to the system or change in the land uses tributary to it. There is a breakdown of the fee reduction. The percentages are arbitrary maximum reduction. There are two triggers one is water quality and one is water quantity. If they meet the Clark County Water quality standards that were in effect from 1995 and 1999. Or meeting the 1992 WDOE Puget Sound manual.

Water Quantity management and there are two criteria you are eligible for a credit if you detain on site and release at a controlled rate per the 1992 WDOE Puget Sound manual or if you retain all your storm water on site in accordance with the 1992 WDOE Puget Sound manual.

Ms. Martin: Do we need to suggest a change in the ordinance?

Mr. Kemper: The first thing we need to do is to look and accept the concept and the rough numbers. We need to decide at what percentage we will accept, and to wait for staff input to make sure it is feasible

Motion 2001-0815-12: To accept the numbers as proposed on the sheet (Summary of findings for Proposed Incentive No. 1, handed out at the 8/15/01 meeting) with the 13%, 33% for water quality. 33% and 66% for the retention and detention numbers and that they get applied to a 75% percent of the total reduction of the fee. 75% is the maximum allowed.

Motion passed

Public Input

There was no public input

Next Meeting

The next Clark County Clean Water Commission meeting will be held on, Wednesday, September 5, 2001.

Looking Ahead

September 19, 2001, 6:00 p.m.-9:00p.m. Guest Speaker, Gary Bock; Begin work on 2003-2004 budget.

Respectfully submitted by Kelli Frost

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